

of continuity between the form and the content of the Lord's Supper seems to leave aspects of his practical arguments *ad hominem* as he merely emphasises his own preferences. Furthermore, with his constant declaration that the Supper looks forwards and backwards, seldom if ever to the present, Witherington's reactualisation of the Supper seems to lack a synchronic anchor. Witherington seems to forget the kerygmatic injunction in Paul's claim that '*We proclaim the Lord's death until he comes*'. The Eucharist gives the Church its identity, an identity founded upon the past in Christ's death, looking forwards to his immanent return, but an identity which locates the Church in *the here and now*. However, *ceteris paribus*, the book is a giant step in the right direction, highlighting the great need for a contemporary reappraisal of the Eucharist within the Church of the twenty-first century.

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The Weakest Link and Other Sermons on the Lord's Supper, Ian MacLeod, Guildford: Grosvenor House Publishing, 2007, pp. 128, ISBN 978-1-906210-56-4. £8.99

Ian MacLeod will be a name that is well known to many parish ministers in the Church of Scotland due to his editing of several books of talks to children – relieving much pressure in many a manse late on a Saturday evening. Here, he displays his expertise and interest in sacramental theology gleaned through postgraduate and doctoral research at the University of Glasgow, but also from the distilled wisdom of a long and active preaching career in pastoral ministry. It is a book of sermons and has both the advantages and disadvantages of such books. The advantages are that it is immediately accessible, warm, engaging and relevant to the ministerial task. MacLeod does not display his academic research on the sacraments in an obvious or forced way, but it seeps through in his obvious command of the material and the way in which he attempts to get across difficult concepts in understandable ways (cf. “These Powerful Symbols”,



p. 71 f.). The disadvantages are of course that using someone else's sermons is a bit like wearing someone else's underpants – they never quite fit! However, in an age where 'communion seasons' and the idea of preparing to receive the Lord's Supper have all but departed from the scene this volume of sermons could function as a useful prompt to ministers as to how they might open up the significance of the sacrament in direct and personal ways. The sermons are relatively brief and each one has a companion prayer attached. Personally, I found the title sermon "The Weakest Link" one of the least satisfying of those offered in this book – though it is by no means a weak sermon, but others, I think, are better – notably "The Darkness of the Cross", a sermon for a Good Friday communion service. However, others will find their own personal gems in this thoughtful and insightful book.

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The Old Kirk,
Kilmacolm



The Eucharist: Bodies, Bread and Resurrection, Andrea Bieler & Luise Schottroff, Minneapolis: Fortress Press, pp. viii, 248, 2007, ISBN 978-0-8006-3867-2. £12.99

This work could hardly be more different from MacLeod's populist approach to the subject. Learned, radical and revisionary would be the most appropriate descriptions of this important work by two notable feminist thinkers from Germany. The book begins with a description of a Eucharistic advent service in which the execution of Stanley Tookie Williams by the state of California is remembered, and it concludes with a description of the Chapel of Reconciliation in Berlin. The book concludes by saying, 'Places such as the Bernauer Strasse in Berlin can inspire us to leave our churches from time to time and celebrate Holy Communion at places that embody sacramental permeability and Eucharistic life for us, places that do not seal or cover up the wounds of violence and at the same time reveal how God's reconciliation is at work among us.' (195) From this you will get a flavour of the approach of this work – it is engaged, experiential

